

JS RESERVED SEATS

'Women MPs accountable only to party, not to people'

MAHBUBA ZANNAT

People can't expect anything from parliament members elected in women's reserved seats as they are not directly elected by them, said rights activists.

The nomination as well as indirect election of the MPs by the party will make them accountable only to the party concerned and not to the general people, they added.

The nomination process was just an eyewash and the women who had strong lobby ultimately got the nomination of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), said Farida Akhter, a women's rights activist.

"If there would have been the provision for direct election, the women candidates could have a chance to communicate with people and prepared themselves to compete for the election," she said.

Political empowerment of women could not take place in the

country since 1972 only for indirect election system, she added.

The nominated women are unlikely to place any issues concerning general people at the House as they are totally detached from them and dependent on the mercy of the party leaders, said Farida.

The present system is also worse than the previous one which allowed a non-partisan candidate to seek nomination, she added.

Defending the indirect election to reserved seats for women in parliament, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed said the present system introduced by the alliance government is much better than previous one.

"It is more democratic and on a par with international practice. Earlier all the 30 reserved seats went to the majority party. But henceforth the increased 45 reserved seats will be distributed among the different parties proportionately," he said.

Termining the rights activists' demand for direct election in the reserved seats as self-contradictory Moudud said there is no country where direct election is held in women's reserved seats.

"It is also not possible constitutionally," he added.

Begum Motia Chowdhury, former agriculture minister of Awami League, questioned if the women can contest for union parishad (UP) chairman post through direct election then why direct election cannot be held in women's reserved seats in parliament?

"As Awami League is not going to parliament, it did not take part in the election to reserved seats for women," she reasoned for her party's nonparticipation.

"As the nominated women MPs are not directly elected by the people, they would have no responsibility to them and the nation cannot expect anything from them," said President of Karmojibi Nari Shirin Akhter.

But the government officials concerned said the nomination system provides privilege and creates scope for women's empowerment.

"In fact the people's representatives are nominating the women MPs and from now on more women can play their role in parliament," said Chairperson of Jatiya Mahila Sangstha, adding that no government actually tends to do anything bad, rather they always take positive steps.

"The applicants are also not ready for direct election. It is difficult for them to reach so many people and it involves so much money in direct election," said Dr Hasina Banu who sought nomination from Jessore.

She however said direct election in women's reserved seats is a must and the government will have to pass a bill for direct election someday.

VACATION COURT FOR CIVIL CASES HC rule on govt

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday issued rule upon the government to show cause why a direction should not be given to constitute vacation court for civil cases during civil court vacation in the subordinate courts every December.

The rule came upon a public interest litigation writ filed by the Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh, a human rights organisation, challenging the month-long holidaying in December.

A vacation bench of the High Court comprising Justice MA Rashid and Justice M Fazlur Rahman issued the rule, returnable in three weeks.

Canadian HR leader calls on Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Canadian Human Rights leader William Flown called on Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina at her Sudha Sadan residence in the city yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed matters relating to country's overall situation, fundamentalism and recent High Court verdict on military rule.

Flown said that he came here to extend his support to the people of Bangladesh against terrorism, fundamentalism and communalism.

AL leaders Saber Hossain Chowdhury and Sayed Abul Hossain MP were present at the meeting.

Three killed in Gazipur road accident

UNB, Gazipur

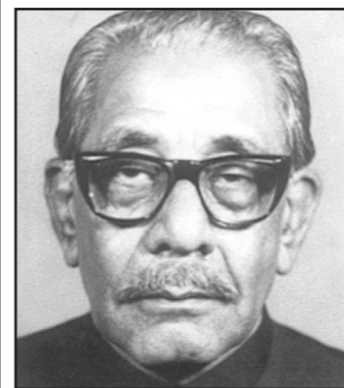
Three people were killed and two others injured in a road accident at Masterbari on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in Sadar Upazila yesterday.

Witnesses said the accident occurred when a Dhaka bound bus from Sipur collided with a truck leaving three men dead on the spot.

Identities of the deceased could not be known immediately. Two injured were admitted to Gazipur Sadar hospital.

Police seized the vehicles, but the drivers managed to escape.

Bodies were sent to hospital morgue for autopsy.



AL leader Abidur Reza passes away

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Former Awami League lawmaker Abidur Reza Khan passed away due to prolonged illness yesterday morning at Samarita Hospital in the city at the age of 78.

He left behind his four sons and a daughter to mourn his death. He was admitted to the Samarita Hospital on August 4.

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina paid her homage to the late leader at his residence at Elephant Road. Hasina also offered doa and munajat for salvation of the departed soul.

Hasina was accompanied by AL leaders Abdur Razzak MP, Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Col Shawkat Ali MP, Momtaz Hossain, BM Mojammeel Huq, Jahangir Kabir Nanak, Mohammad Bachchu Mian, Enamul Huq Shamim.

Abidur Reza was a senior lawyer and an advisor to the Awami Ainjibi Parishad.

Muhiba Khatun



Muhiba Khatun (Tulmoni), wife of late Nazabuddin Ahmed, a retired judge, passed away at her house on Friday at the age of 90 years, says a press release.

A founder-member of the Palli Udyog, she was also involved in various activities of Mahila Samity.

She is survived by her 11 sons and daughters and a number of grandchildren. She was buried at Azimpur Graveyard.

Her kulkhwani will be held at her house, Muhiba Manzil, at Elephant Road in the city after Maghrib prayers on September 5.

Implement CEDAW

Women's rights activists urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women's rights activists at a discussion yesterday called on the government to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) without any delay to protect the rights of women.

They also demanded restoration of the original version of the Women Development Policy and its implementation.

The Bangladesh Mahila Parishad organised the discussion at the Cirdap auditorium in the city to mark the CEDAW Day.

The women's organisations, including the Mahila Parishad, have long been demanding withdrawal of all reservations to the CEDAW, but the government has been dilly-dallying over the issue, said Nasimun Ara Huq, international affairs secretary of the Parishad.

The Women Development Policy-1997 had been framed after consultation with the women leaders and members of civil society, she said, but the alliance government has deviated from the constitutional guarantee for equal rights of women by revising the policy.

The changes brought to the National Women's Development Policy are inconsistent with the CEDAW, said Ayesha Khanam, general secretary of the Parishad.

She also demanded direct election to the parliamentary seats reserved for women and an increase in the number of seats.

Advocate Salma Khan and Barrister Sara Hossain also spoke at the discussion chaired by woman leader Hena Das.

ADS ON SMOKING

Financial Express editor, BATB official sued

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Health directorate yesterday filed a criminal case against British-American Tobacco's deputy managing director (DMD) and Financial Express editor for publishing an advertisement on smoking.

Dr Miah Belayet Hossain, assistant director (Disease Control) of the directorate filed the case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court.

After hearing, Metropolitan Magistrate AJM Abdullah Baqui recorded statement of the complainant and directed the accused to appear before it on October 3.

The accused are Golam Moin Uddin, DMD of British-American Tobacco, Bangladesh and Financial Express Editor Moazzem Hossain.

In his complaint, Belayet Hossain said that the government had passed an anti-smoking law on March 13 this year. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare declared the law effective from March 26 through a gazette notification as per sub-clause 1(2) of the bill.

The law also prohibits advertisements of tobacco products in movie houses and on government and private TV channels, sale of movies or videotapes containing advertisements of tobacco products, publication of ads in books, magazines, leaflets, handbills, billboards and newspapers.

But the accused in collusion with each other published an advertisement on smoking in The Financial Express on August 21, which was the gross violation of the Anti-Smoking Law, the complainant added.



Ayesha Khanam, general secretary of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, speaks at a discussion at Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday. The Mahila Parishad organised the event to mark the CEDAW Day.

Sound rural dev strategy a must for poverty cut

Experts say at international seminar

UNB, Dhaka

A sound rural development strategy can reduce poverty significantly through sustainable rural development, experts told an international seminar in the city yesterday.

Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan was the chief guest at the inaugural session of the three-day seminar on 'Sustainable Rural Development' at the LGED Bhaban.

Bhuiyan said the topic of the seminar was an important issue, which needs to be discussed in depth to assess how the government institutions may be more effective to sustain the development initiatives, specially the rural development initiatives.

"In Bangladesh, majority of the population live in the rural areas and poverty is widespread. According to recent estimates over 40 percent of them still live below poverty line and half of them is considered to be the hard core poor," he said.

LGED chief engineer M Shahidul Hassan chaired the inaugural session. Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) and Japan International

Cooperation Agency (JICA) jointly organised the seminar.

Director General of Local Government Division Sharful Alam and Charge d'Affaires of Japan Embassy Hidetoshi Ukita were present as special guests.

Superintendent Engineer and Coordinator of RDEC Setting-up Project of LGED M Wahidur Rahman presented a keynote paper on "Rural Development Strategy and its Impact on Poverty Reduction."

Bhuiyan that the present government has given top priority to eradicating poverty in order to promote economic growth and other socio-economic issues that affect the poor people.

"Therefore, reducing poverty means rural development through creating suitable rural infrastructure and employment generation. But rural infrastructure in the country that contribute towards rural development are mostly backward and poorly maintained," he said.

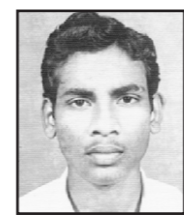
He assured the seminar of taking necessary steps to implement its recommendations for the betterment of the people.

Wahidur Rahman, in his keynote paper, said rural development in Bangladesh shifted focus from

infrastructure-related to agriculture to total accessibility improvement.

The rural development strategy has shifted to multiple avenues such as accessibility improvement, local governance, empowerment of women and caring for environment, he said. "Change of focus was demand-driven and need of time."

Death anniversary



Today is the 34th death anniversary of Shaheed Khaza Nizamuddin Bhuiyan Bir Uttam, says a press release.

A valiant freedom fighter, he died in a fight with the Pakistani occupation forces in Sylhet during the Liberation War.

Shaheed Khaza Nizamuddin Bir Uttam Smriti Sangsad will hold different programmes at Dhaka and Comilla to mark the day.

Programmes will also be held at the house of his younger brother at 15/1 Lake Circus, Kalabagan, after Asr prayers.

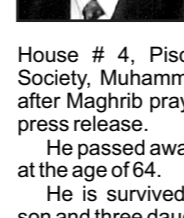
Sabiqun Nahar Pari



The first death anniversary of Sabiqun Nahar Pari, a headmistress of Morgan Girls' High School in Narayanganj, will be observed today, says a press release.

A milad mahfil will be held at her village home at Sonargaon today.

Qulkhwani



Qulkhwani of Manzoor Murshid, a retired deputy general manager of the Janata Bank, will be held at his house at Road # 4, House # 4, Pisciculture Housing Society, Muhammadpur, in the city after Maghrib prayers today, says a press release.

He passed away on September 1 at the age of 64.

He is survived by his wife, one son and three daughters.



Law Minister Moudud Ahmed speaks at a seminar on 'Hijab Issues' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. The Assembly For Protection of Hijab Bangladesh organised the seminar to mark the International Hijab Solidarity Day.

BIM plagued by corruption, nepotism

ABDUL KADER

Mismanagement, corruption and nepotism have allegedly plagued the Bangladesh Institute of Management (BIM), but the industries ministry appears to be indifferent to various allegations against the director general of the institute.

The officials and staffers brought allegations of irregularities and mismanagement against Acting DG M Nizamuddin and said they have become helpless and hostage to such acts.

Initially, the ministry concerned had only sat on a directive from a parliamentary committee to probe the allegations.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Industries received allegations of corrupt practices and irregularities several months ago, prompting the committee Chairman Maj. Gen.

(Retd.) Mahmudul Hasan MP to forward a letter to the industries minister on May 29, asking him to take necessary action against Nizamuddin.

But the ministry neither took any action against him nor formed any committee to inquire into the allegations.

The committee chairman again raised the issue at the recent meeting of the committee on August 17. He also formed a sub-committee to look into the allegations and asked it to submit a report in a month, sources said.

"In the previous standing committee meeting held in June, I asked the industries minister what action was taken against the acting DG," Mahmudul Hasan told The Daily Star, adding that the minister then replied: "We are taking action."

The allegations against Nizamuddin include irregularities in

recruitment and promotions. Besides, he has created a post of staff officer, attached to the DG, in gross violation of the existing BIM organogram, sources said.

When contacted, Acting DG Nizamuddin dismissed the allegations as 'absolutely false'. "I don't know anything about these. Had the allegations been true, the ministry would have informed me," he added.

On the other hand, the BIM officials alleged that the ministry is favouring him for reasons unknown to them.

"We are feeling very much insecure, fearing uncertainty of our future career here, as the acting DG appoints and promotes his relatives and those loyal to him even defying seniority status and tempering the annual confidential report (ACR)," said a BIM official seeking anonymity.

Dowry claims another life

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman died in the capital on Friday, nine days after her husband set fire to her by pouring kerosene for her failure to provide him with dowry.

Prior to her death the victim, Sohana Parvin Sheela, 31, told the reporters that her husband Humayun Kabir also beat her up before setting fire.

"It was 11:00am on August 24 when he started to beat me up confining me to our bedroom as I failed to bring him dowry," said Sheela, adding that her son and daughter were at their school then.

The couple lived at a rented house on Road No 8 of Sonadanga Residential Area in Khulna.

As she collapsed at one stage of beating, Humayun poured kerosene and set fire to her, said victim's relatives.

Seeing the fire, the landlord rescued Sheela, the daughter of a retired superintendent of police.

The landlord also caught Humayun and handed him over to police.

With over 80 percent of her body burnt, the victim was rushed to a local clinic and later to Khulna Sadar Hospital.

As her condition deteriorated, relatives brought her to Dhaka and admitted her to City Hospital at Panthapath the following day.

Sheela succumbed to her injuries at 5:00pm.

Shibir activists work in guise of JCD men at JU!

JU CORRESPONDENT

Jahangirnagar University (JU) authorities have taken additional security measures to avert any further untoward incident on the campus following the attack at Shaheed Salam Barkat Hall that left five students injured on Thursday night.

Police have been kept on high alert at several points in and outside the campus to meet any eventuality.

The university proctor-body at a meeting on Friday night took the decision to increase security measure on the campus considering the alleged Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) involvement in the attack.

"We are conducting an in-depth investigation into the incident," said Prof Kamrul Ahsan, proctor of JU.

"The ICS activists are carrying out activities on the campus in the guise of JCD activists," said Prof Anu Mohammad of Economics department.

"Despite repeated attempts in the past, Shibir cadres never succeeded in taking control of the campus and we must be united to resist the evil force," he added.

Sources said both factions of the JCD are flooded with undercover Shibir activists who are planning to get them locked in bloody clashes to capture the campus.

The Shibir activists have also made a list of progressive journalists, cultural and political activists who are raising voice against the revival of ICS activities on the campus.

"Thursday's incident is a clear indication of ICS involvement in it. We are now more aware about Shibir activists and we will prevent them from entering the campus," said Parvez Mallick, president of JU JCD.

Meanwhile, General Secretary of JU JCD Ehsanul Huque Ashish who led the attack was expelled from the

Int'l peace award for Mainudin Maizbhandari

BSS, Dhaka

Leading spiritual and religious personality Syed Mainuddin Ahmed Maizbhandari returned home yesterday from Ghana's capital of Accra attending an international peace conference that conferred on him the "grand ambassador for Islam and peace" award.

A large number of people including his followers and admirers, including former army chief lieutenant general (retd) Noor Uddin Khan received him at the Zia International Airport.

Vice president of Ghana Alhaj Ali Mohammed on August 28 handed over him the award conferred jointly by the African International Mission for World Peace, the Accra-based Grand National Council for Islamic Celebration and the US-based Universal Islamic Centre "in conformity with the fundamental divine principles of universal peace and Islam."

The citation of the award said Syed Mainuddin Ahmed was chosen for the honour as he dedicated his life for virtuous practices to promote pristine ideals of moral values, international harmony, inter-religious cooperation, Islamic education... spiritual beauty and the spirit of atonement and reconciliation.

International peace activists, Islamic leaders, leading religious figures representing world's other major faiths, diplomats, civil society leaders and politicians from all over the world attended the three-day conference in Accra.

Syed Moinuddin also made a courtesy call on President of Ghana JK Kapua.

Rape of child condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad yesterday in a statement condemned the rape of a minor girl by a fake pir in Narayanganj.

It demanded the arrest and punishment to the pir (a religious guide). It also demanded proper treatment of the child and security to the family.

Mahila Parishad urged the government to take necessary steps to stop illicit activities in the name of religion.

Pir Nur Mohammad, 70, allegedly raped the five-year-old girl pointing a knife on her throat on Thursday noon when she, daughter of a poor rickshaw-puller, went to the Puraan Saydur Kaderia Khankah Sharif nearby her house.

Her father filed a case in this regard.

WEATHER TODAY Light to moderate rain likely UNB, Dhaka

Table with 4 columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius (Max, Min), Humidity in percentage (Morning, Evening)